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SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 000118

AF/E FOR MARIA BEYZEROV

E.O. 12958: DECL: (####)

TAGS: AORC EAID PGOV PREL MA MP

SUBJECT: MAURITIUS ON RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE IN MADAGASCAR

REF: STATE 35767

Classified by Charge Virginia Blaser for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On April 13, CDA met with Mauritian Foreign Minister (FM), Arvin Boolel, to discuss reftel points. The FM commented that while Mauritius concurs with the need to push for new elections in Madagascar, the GOM prefers working under the IOC model and plan, even while noting that it is "known to be French-influenced." The timetables preferred by other international partners, most specifically the push to have new elections within six months, is seen as "impractical" by the Mauritian FM. He opined that before elections are held, all the international organizations need to "kick start the election process by reconciling all the stakeholders, including the political parties, the military, and the church."

¶2. (C) CDA asked what role Mauritius could or would be willing to play within the IOC, AU or SADC to add pressure on Madagascar for rapid elections, and the FM was noncommittal. He raised the GOM's care toward their "small but influential business community in Madagascar" and the need to protect their interests.

¶3. (C) Following up on the FM/CDA meeting, on April 15 acting DCM made reftel points to Ambassador Patrice Cure, Head of the Multilateral Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Generally, Ambassador Cure's response mirrored that of the Foreign Minister. Cure told A/DCM that Mauritius is committed to ensuring that Madagascar holds elections and returns to constitutional legality. "We have no double standard," he said, despite the fact that "we have a lot of business in Madagascar." Pressure from Mauritius is needed and will be exerted, he added. Cure cautioned, however, that "a totally judgmental approach might be counter-productive" to gaining democratic elections.

¶4. (C) With the current conditions in Madagascar, its size, and its level of development, Cure said more than six months may be needed to organize elections. Even when pressed, like the FM, Cure would not commit to a Mauritian preferred time frame for new elections in Madagascar. Cure noted that Mauritius would continue to work to pressure Madagascar's government through the AU, SADC, and the IOC. He expressed concern that the U.S. might feel that France had a great deal of influence with the IOC, and might have its own agenda toward Madagascar. He believes the current regime in Madagascar has no objections to international monitoring when elections are held.

¶5. (C) Comment: Mauritius once again appears unlikely to get ahead of its neighbors regarding internal affairs of another African nation. In this case, Mauritius' business ties with Madagascar reinforce its habit of not taking strong stands.

BLASER